

North Dakota State Engineer's Professionalism Award Nomination

Name of Nominee: Pat Fridgen, Natural Resource Economist, Planning and Education Division

Nominated By: Linda Weispfenning, Planner IV

In the space provided, please complete a detailed documentation of the nominee's accomplishments relevant to the questions. Please only complete questions that you are knowledgeable of on the nominee.

1 Describe how the nominee has routinely demonstrated the ability to perform high-quality work while supporting the Office of the State Engineer/State Water Commission's mission and goals.

Over the course of Pat's employment with the State Water Commission he has been assigned a variety of complex plan development responsibilities including the development of the State Water Commission and State Engineer's 2004-2007 Strategic Plan. This plan has received special recognition within the water community as it clearly lays out the agency's vision, mission, goals and the projects and programs designed to address those goals. Accomplishing this task required that Pat work closely with division heads as well as key agency staff involved in special project areas.

Pat has been actively engaged in accomplishing the goals assigned to the Planning and Education Division especially his lead role in updating the agency's biennial Water Development reports.

Pat routinely demonstrates his ability to generate high quality work through the above mentioned projects as well as his work in producing the Oxbow portion of the North Dakota Water Magazine and working with the Red River and Missouri River Joint Boards. The Red River Joint Water Resource Board's 2007-2009 Water Management Strategy is an example of an important water planning document that Pat was instrumental in developing. Senator Tom Fishcher, working for the Joint Board and with Pat on this project, has repeatedly commented on the excellent work that Pat contributes.

The professional quality of Pat's work is evident in every product he is asked to develop.

2 Share examples of how the nominee has consistently demonstrated concern toward fellow employees and unselfishly offered assistance when help is needed.

In accomplishing the variety of tasks he is assigned, Pat must work closely with agency staff in all divisions. He is mindful of the agency's organizational structure and has developed relationships with other staff that fosters a "team" philosophy in accomplishing tasks. This serves to keep all staff on board through the evolution of a project and promotes a sense of accomplishment for all participants when a project is successfully completed. I believe staff respond very favorably to working with Pat since he always carries his fair share of the workload and more.

Pat has frequently offered to assist other staff in preparing presentations whether they are

Name of Nominee: Pat Fridgen, Natural Resource Economist, Planning and Education Division

for powerpoint presentations or published documents. It is often necessary for Pat in this assignments to work with our graphic artist and others with special technical skills. He understands that some projects often require short turn around times and he makes every effort to prevent undue pressure on support staff to meet project deadlines.

3 How has the nominee dependably carried out job tasks, taken the initiative to complete work in a timely manner, and exhibited a positive attitude toward the work he/she performs?

Pat typically requires minimal supervision in accomplishing the projects he has been assigned. A prime example of how he has dependably carried out assigned tasks is the role he has played in the development of the agency's Strategic Plan mentioned earlier. Additionally, Pat routinely produces the Oxbow and Primer sections published in the Water Magazine. Developing article topics is accomplished through his understanding of important water issues and his initiative to develop or seek assistance in developing article materials. Pat has demonstrated strong initiative in selecting topics and conducting research necessary to present an accurate story. The work he and Mike Noone, who contributes with Pat, casts a very positive, informative light on the agency's wide range of water management activities. Pat has never failed to meet a publishing deadline.

Probably one of the foremost examples of Pat's initiative and ability to carry out tasks is his role in developing the State Engineer's new Sovereign Lands Plan. The new plan required substantial research and coordination both within and outside the agency. Pat's initiative and ability to work with a team of State Water Commission staff resulted in the development of an important resource management tool that will likely become a model emulated by many other states.

Pat has repeatedly met difficult deadlines in producing products that others depend upon such as the biennial reports that must be prepared in time for presentation to the legislature early in their sessions. In a related task, Pat's has effectively pulled together the agency's budget testimony the State Engineer provides to the legislative budget committees. He works with all division heads and special project managers to acquire pertinent information and assembles it into a quality document. Last minute changes are typical and Pat does whatever is necessary to produce a quality product that reflects well on the agency.

4 Describe how the nominee has fostered a cooperative, respectful, and mutually satisfying work relationship with other employees and the public.

As suggested above, Pat has repeatedly demonstrated his ability to work with a wide range of natural resource professionals in accomplishing the projects he has been assigned. Again, the development of the State Engineer's Sovereign Lands Plan is probably the most conspicuous example. Pat not only worked with engineering experts on staff but coordinated with attorney general staff, and the staffs of several other natural resource management agencies. Pat followed a course of action that involved stakeholders early in the process and provided them frequent opportunities for review and comment. Pat

Name of Nominee: Pat Fridgen, Natural Resource Economist, Planning and Education Division

arranged public meetings held statewide to offer opportunities to provide input. Now that the Sovereign Lands planning process has been completed, I believe all agency staff that were involved feel they have been integral to the development of the final product.

Another example might be Pat's ability to work with the Red River Joint Water Board in developing their 2007-2009 Water Management Strategy. Working with Tom Fischer, the board's employee, Pat was able to develop a document that has required only minor fine tuning to meet the expectations of the Joint Board members.

Yet another example might be Pat's efforts to assist in organization of the Missouri River Joint Water Board. Pat worked with Ken Royse and Ron Sando to refine organizational documents and a State Water Commission assistance agreement that will help get that board up and running.

5 Describe a work product created by the nominee, which has helped the Office of the State Engineer/State Water Commission improve services, internally and/or externally?

Three obvious examples are the State Water Commission and Office of State Engineer's 2004-2007 Strategic Plan, the 2005-2007 and 2007-2009 Water Development reports and the North Dakota Sovereign Lands Management Plan recently published. (Please see the attached memo for more discussion on Pat's role in developing the new Sovereign Lands Plan.) I should also point out Pat's role in the development of the new Ordinary High Watermark delineation guidelines which are critical to identifying sovereign land boundaries. The new guidelines were developed under an agreement Pat helped structure and administer.

Others products include production of the Oxbow and Primer sections of the North Dakota Water Magazine and the Red River Joint Board's 2007-2009 Water Management Strategy document. Pat has regularly produced powerpoint presentations for the State Engineer for use in forums such as the annual Water Users convention. Articles and powerpoint presentations are significant to improving services through increasing stakeholder awareness of water resources management proposals, issues and accomplishments.

6 Describe an advancement the nominee has made that has had a significant positive impact on the quality of services rendered, and/or on the Office of the State Engineer/State Water Commission's reputation.

Probably most applicable example in this case would be the development of the new North Dakota Sovereign Lands Management Plan. When it was suggested by the Attorney General's Office that the State Engineer develop and use a Sovereign Lands Management Plan to guide relevant permitting decisions, virtually no one on the State Water Commission staff had the necessary background to develop such a plan. When assigned the task of leading this effort, Pat did exhaustive research in all applicable legal and other published references and made extensive contacts with management entities in other states looking for

Name of Nominee: Pat Fridgen, Natural Resource Economist, Planning and Education Division

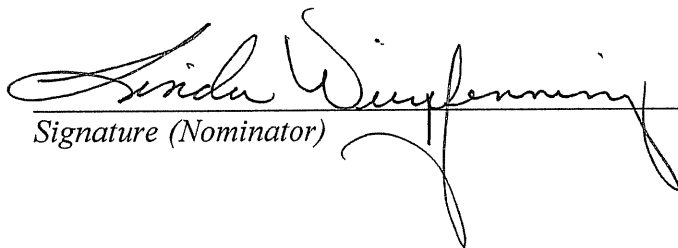
a model to use for North Dakota. Finding only bits and pieces of useful information, Pat was instrumental in pulling together initial draft language and recommendations that eventually evolved into the document that has been published. Throughout the process it was necessary to confer with legal counsel from the Attorney General's office, SWC staff and with representatives of the Sovereign Lands Technical Advisory Committee. The new plan will provide the basis for more consistent decisions that will govern the use of one of North Dakota's most important land resources.

7 List any steps the nominee has taken for self improvement.

Pat came to his current position with a Master Degree in Natural Resources Management which substantially exceeds the basic requirements for his position. He has attended numerous conferences both within the state, interstate and internationally (Manitoba) over the course of his employment with the State Water Commission to stay current on developments and issues important to water management in North Dakota.

As necessary, Pat has conferred with experts at NDSU, (example: Dr. Steve Schultz) to improve or enhance his personal capability to complete a task such as supporting the development of a difficult and contentious economic impact analysis of low water levels in Lake Sakakawea.


Pat was instrumental in arranging sovereign lands management ordinary highwater mark training for himself, key State Water Commission employees and representatives of several other agencies. This training is critical to implementing the new State Sovereign Lands Plan.


Signature (Nominator)

12-19-07
Date

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dale L. Frink, State Engineer and the State Engineer's Professionalism Award review committee

FROM: Linda Weispfenning, Planner IV 

SUBJECT: State Engineer's Professionalism Award

DATE: December 18, 2007

I am recommending Pat Fridgen, State Water Commission Natural Resource Economist, for the State Engineer's Professionalism Award for several reasons but particularly for his work involving the development of the new State Sovereign Land Management Plan.

I have heard many comments from staff and others that Pat Fridgen has done an outstanding job in development of the State Sovereign Land Management Plan and I believe he should be formally recognized for his efforts. I believe Pat has surpassed the qualifying criteria to receive this recognition.

Although several State Water Commission staff members were directly involved in this effort, Pat took the lead role in the plan development process. He tackled the project with very little previous knowledge of sovereign land management and within a very short time developed a thorough understanding of the issues and complexity of sovereign land management. Pat, with the input and guidance of other key State Water commission staff members, has produced a document that will provide a technically and legally sound guidance for the State Engineer in satisfying his regulatory responsibilities over sovereign lands.

Pat took the lead in conducting research to learn what other states had done in this area of resource management. Research included an analysis of major technical and legal issues surrounding sovereign lands management. Pat identified and communicated with the appropriate persons in states across the country to learn how they approached this issue. In so doing, he was able to identify many good ideas as well as numerous pitfalls that North Dakota should consider in developing our own management approach. Information gleaned from these sources provided important insights on how others had set up their technical, "on-the-ground" programs as well as their legal frameworks. The later required Pat to work closely with our legal counsel to gain an accurate understanding of statutes and case law that would come into play in addressing this very complex management issue.

Pat was also responsible for initiating and coordinating interagency participation in the planning process. This required several interagency meetings. The collaboration began by advising the agencies of our intent to develop the new plan and providing background information regarding sovereign land management status in North Dakota. Interagency

participation was facilitated throughout the planning process by holding meetings to identify and work through agency concerns and issues. A formal interagency review of the draft document provided input that was considered in finalizing the plan document. At the end of the planning process, Pat arranged sovereign lands management ordinary high water mark training for our staff and staff of other agencies which included both classroom and field components.

Pat was responsible for assessing and recommending changes to address comments from other state agencies and the public into the final plan document. This also required working with our legal counsel to ensure there were no legal conflicts or concerns that would result from changes that were being considered. Overall, this required negotiation and compromise to achieve concurrence with sometimes conflicting and competing viewpoints among individuals and agencies that were protecting their constituents interests. In some cases, Pat was the key mediator among the differing interests. He approached the process with an open mind and carefully studied and evaluated the consequences of the recommended sovereign land policy proposals.

As has been mentioned, Pat had to consult with legal counsel to assure that no legal conflicts would result. He worked very closely with legal counsel to ensure that plan recommendations were consistent with existing law. Some proposed actions required changes in existing administrative rules to provide clarification and allow for the implementation of recommendations. Pat worked on developing the administrative rules that should be approved soon. This was a very complex process and Pat skillfully brought it to fruition with the utmost professionalism.

Pat worked on this project in addition to many other very demanding duties assigned to him. He was able to manage his workload efficiently and effectively and as always provided a very high quality product.

Throughout development of the new Sovereign Lands planning process Pat demonstrated his aptitude to advance his understanding of complicated issues. This is true in the case of both management processes and legal frameworks. As mentioned above, Pat arranged staff sovereign lands ordinary high water mark training for himself, other relevant State Water Commission staff and the staff of other agencies. In other areas of his responsibilities, Pat has been the agency representative in planning the past and the upcoming Red River Basin Commission annual conferences. These conferences provide an important opportunity for many levels of resource managers to collaborate and learn about natural resource issues in the Red River Basin.

Thank you for considering Pat to receive the annual State Engineer's Professionalism Award.